

## Outdoor Warning Siren FAQ's

### What is the purpose of the sirens?

The sirens are to notify citizens who are out of doors that they need to seek shelter immediately and turn on their TV or radio for information.

### When are the sirens sounded?

- Tornado activity or severe weather with sustained straight line winds in excess of 50 MPH (hurricane force) or potential for same.
- Hazardous Materials release involving a large area of the city
- Other emergencies as determined by the Emergency Management Director, Fire Chief or Police Chief

### Who decides to set off the sirens? Who sets off the sirens?

For weather situations, the National Weather Service in Chanhassen contacts the Hennepin County Sheriff's Communication Center who in turn activates the sirens.

### Why do the sirens go off the first Wednesday each month at 1:00?

This is a test to insure that not only do the sirens receive the activation signal, but also are functioning properly.

### Why can't I hear the sirens in my house or business?

The pole mounted sirens are intended as an "outdoor" warning. Outdoor Sirens are designed to warn people who are out of doors and would not normally have a radio or TV with them. With current construction methods and sound insulation, it is difficult to achieve sound penetration into structures. For this reason, Maple Grove Emergency Management recommends that each business and household purchase a weather alert radio.

### Is there a volume adjustment on the sirens?

There is not a volume adjustment on the siren; however sirens may seem louder in the fall and winter as there is less foliage to absorb the sound.

### If the television or radio recommends taking shelter, but the sirens are not sounding, what steps should I take?

Don't wait for the sirens to sound if you see severe weather and are warned by TV or radio to take cover do so immediately.

### What happens if the power fails? Will the sirens still sound?

In most cases the siren should sound before severe weather could affect power. But if power is lost, the siren will not sound. It is every citizen's responsibility to be aware of changing weather conditions and take proper action.

### How come Maple Grove sirens don't have battery back-up for power failures?

Several of the sirens are not designed to operate off of battery power as they are 20 - 25 years old. Those sirens purchased over the past 5 years can be modified at a cost of \$5000.00 per siren. Any future sirens purchased will have battery back-up and the city is looking to upgrade those sirens covering outdoor venues such as larger city parks and sports facilities.

### How much does a new siren cost?

A new siren, including electronics to operate it, pole or other structure to mount it on, and battery backup, can cost up to \$17,000.00 per siren.

### How are the sirens maintained?

City personnel visit each siren several times during the year. In addition, the electronics at each siren run weekly diagnostics which generate a report for the city emergency management staff. If a problem is detected, service personnel are dispatched.

### How many sirens are there in Maple Grove?

Currently there are 16 sirens strategically placed throughout the city.

### How is it decided where a siren will be placed?

Engineering studies conducted by the city and siren manufacturers determine the location providing the best coverage of an area with the least interference by trees and land features. These studies also take into account the proximity to other sirens.